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AMERICANIZATION

THE
CHICAGO ASSOCIATION
OF COMMERCE

1919 ANNUAL REPORT
REPRINT

“America is another name for Opportunity. Our whole history appears like a last effort of Divine Providence in behalf of the human race.”—
Emerson.

General Report of Committee on Americanization of The Chicago Association of Commerce

By

WILLIAM A. BOND, Chairman

JANUARY 1, 1920

THE Committee on Americanization was re-appointed for the year 1919 with the same chairman and the addition of another member. The initial meeting was held January 14 and the following standing subcommittees named: Class Extension, Legislative, Insignia and Certificate, Naturalization, Foreign Language, Newspaper and Primer. The committee further organized from their number seven Visiting Committees, two members constituting a unit, for a group of industries of which they have oversight.

To intensify Americanization activities in Chicago, a letter was sent to representative public men asking the following question: "What in your judgment are the motives and ideals that lie behind the Americanization movement?" Most interesting and helpful replies were received from the Governor, Frank O. Lowden, James B. Forgan, George M. Reynolds, Peter A. Mortenson, Dr. John Timothy Stone, and many others.

Early in the year, at the committee's recommendation, the Executive committee approved the following policy with reference to enemy aliens:

"We firmly believe and petition that all enemy aliens in this country who in the judgment of the Department of Justice were perniciously active in opposition to the best interests of the United States should, at the end of the war, be deported, and forever debarred from returning to this country."

A joint conference of our committee with teachers engaged in conducting classes in the industries was held at the Union League Club. From time to time the leading officials of the Board of Education have attended our monthly meetings. Special card posters were made showing the promotional advantages to the employe from learning the English language. These were printed by the Board of Education and distributed by the Association to its entire membership, and 1,500 were displayed in Chicago factories. Upon application from industrial employers many were mailed for use in other cities, especially in New England.

The committee also prepared a twenty-four-page illustrated booklet giving a report of the year's work in co-operation with the Board of Education in Amerization from July 16, 1918, to July 16, 1919, and putting forth the inquiry, "Does it pay?" The Board of Education printed at its own expense 11,000 copies, which were distributed by our committee to the entire membership of the Association, 1,100 chambers of commerce, 500 public libraries, and all members of congress. From correspondence received we have reason to believe that this report of Chicago's Americanization work has had a stimulating effect in promoting Americanization bills now before congress, as well as state legislation covering large appropriations.

During the year special articles were published by *The Saturday Evening Post*, *Everybody's Magazine*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and other journals calling attention to what Chicago is doing in Americanization.

At present the committee has in operation sixty classes, meeting 148 times a week and reaching over 6,600 students in thirty-two firms.

With one exception these are all day classes, it having been found that the attendance in industrial establishments is almost guaranteed because of this fact. Moreover, many of them are held on company time. The patriotism of our employers in this particular is much to be commended.

The special work of the committee included:

Conferences held by the chairman with the secretary, approximately 100.

Class Extension committee has held seventy-seven conferences.

The Legislative committee has held two conferences to consider the Smith-Bankhead Americanization bill, which received, on the committee's recommendation, the approval of the Executive committee of the Association. Telegrams were sent to the representatives and congressmen from the district urging its passage. One conference was held on the Kenyon education bill. Action on this matter is pending.

The Insignia and Certificate committee held two conferences at which the rules determining the distribution of the citizenship class pin were worked out. As a result of this committee's work 1,049 pins have been distributed to students.

The Naturalization committee has held five conferences and 388 men have been induced to secure their citizenship papers. This committee, in conjunction with the Insignia and Certificate committee, has prepared a simple program of patriotic exercises, which has added impressive interest to the meetings at which the pins are distributed.

The Foreign Language Newspaper committee held four meetings which resulted in a conference with editors of representative foreign language newspapers about Americanization service which could be utilized by the foreign language press. As a result of this conference the chairman of the Committee on Americanization had a personal conference with the Secretary of the Interior, Franklin K. Lane, in Washington, and presented recommendations which received his approval and support. Through personal conferences with the Department of Labor, with Senator King and others at Washington, the committee has been in close touch with proposed Americanization legislation, and they have become familiar with our work.

The Primer committee held thirteen conferences and reports that twenty-five lessons have been completed and are in use in the classes in leaflet form, and there has been a great demand for a supply of these leaflets from other cities. One hundred civic primers by Prof. Zmerhal have been distributed to the civics classes. A supplementary lesson on taxes has been distributed also to the civics classes.

Our seven visiting committees have made twenty visits to different firms and have been of great service in maintaining the

cordial co-operation of the employers, the managers in direct charge of the classes, and the teachers.

An address was made by the chairman at the All-American exposition at the Coliseum, September 11, and on request from other organizations, both in and out of Chicago, thirty-four addresses were made during the year by other members of the committee and our secretary.

It has been arranged at an early date in further promoting the extension of the factory classes to make public demonstration of the work by a series of moving pictures. We have been assured the aid of the Board of Education in preparing films and it is the intention to exhibit them to industrial employers in Chicago and, by request, to organizations outside of the city and state, and we hope in metropolitan theatres as a part of the "weekly current events" display.

In closing special mention should be made of the following points:

1. The support and co-operation of all the officials and staff of the Board of Education has been all important and generous and I believe it will be accorded to us in even greater measure in the future. We have this year requested the members of the board to make a special appropriation for "industrial Americanization classes," and to include twice the amount used last year. We have received much encouragement that both requests will have favorable consideration in their budget for 1920.

2. The Americanization committee has not been a "one-man" committee. The very nature of the work requires and has received devoted and personal service from all. Without this classes could not be established and maintained. I, therefore, wish to acknowledge to each individual member of the committee my sincere thanks.

3. Both the Board of Education and our committee realize that "Americanization" work is only in its infancy—and from experience I believe I can also say that for its promotion and greatest development the dual combination of business men and educational forces is ideal. The movement has become nation-wide. Legislation involving hundreds of millions is before congress for educational purposes and for the betterment of the condition of our alien people, and I urge the Association to give it the benefit of its support.

COMMITTEE ON AMERICANIZATION

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